



Seattle Police Officers' Guild
2949 Fourth Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98134
206.767.1150
www.seattlepoliceofficers.org

Mike Solan – President
Dan Auderer– Vice President
Walt Hayden – Secretary/Treasurer

June 10, 2021

Mayor Durkan,

Given your role as Mayor of the City of Seattle, I'm writing to you as a current police officer employed by the City of Seattle and as President of the Seattle Police Officers' Guild (SPOG). This letter is to inform you that on behalf of the members of SPOG, we are filing an official complaint to your office pertaining to the conduct of a fellow City of Seattle employee(s) of the Department of Finance Administrative Services (FAS). Details are as follows:

As you are aware, the SPOG membership is comprised of a diverse group of quality human beings. Many of us are proud LGBTQ members. A third of us are persons of color. We know that we reflect Seattle's values and we are proud to be police officers for the City of Seattle. We love our community.

As you are the leader of the City of Seattle, we are writing to you to address the inexcusable conduct of one of your employees. With our membership's diverse, inclusive footprint, we are deeply hurt, upset and alarmed by a recent official FAS citywide email authored by an employee within the FAS Department. This employee has been identified as Daniel Holmberg (senior management systems analyst) in FAS's "Change Team". Mr. Holmberg's official city email violated the city's employee conduct policies and your department's vision, mission and values statement. It is also in stunning conflict to the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative covering ALL City of Seattle employee conduct.

On June 2, 2021 at approximately 2:21pm, Mr. Holmberg used his official city email address and sent a citywide FAS ALL email (contained in this letter below) titled, "White Supremacy thrives without consequences." The content contained in Mr. Holmberg's official city message intentionally targeted ALL City of Seattle police officers and broadly maligned and besmirched police officers across the nation. Mr. Holmberg's message was unreasonable, bigoted, biased, discriminatory, deranged, devoid of logic and lacked anything remotely factual.

Here is his email correspondence sent to other city employees:

White supremacy thrives without consequences

By Daniel Holmberg, FAS Change Team Member

*"White supremacist groups have **infiltrated** U.S. law enforcement agencies in every region of the country over the last two decades." This is not conjecture, hyperbole, or isolated to a handful of bad actors. It's the finding of a decade old FBI **report** that illustrates just how ensconced white supremacy has become within our institutions. And it has only gotten worse.*

*We turn to police and the justice system to protect us and enforce consequences on those who break our laws and cause harm. Those consequences are supposed to be balanced, blind to all but the law. But they are not—not when you consider that a Black person is three times more likely to be killed during a police encounter than a white person, according to **findings by Harvard**. When the arbiters of justice serve the false gods of white supremacy, they are not*



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worthy of the power they wield. If police protection and restraint extend only to white people, they are no longer guardians; they are mercenaries and zealots, paid in the wages of white privilege, inflicting their wicked commandments upon us.

*The events that occurred at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 could not offer a starker exemplar of this infiltration. As the facts unfold, it's clear that an organized domestic white power terrorist cell (or cells) were among those who coordinated and executed a planned attack on Congress. They **broke windows, destroyed property, and wiped their feces** on the walls as they hunted congressmembers. They erected functioning gallows and, among the hateful imagery that day, donned Confederate flags and an anti-Semitic **"Camp Auschwitz" shirt**. The same American flag that suffered so much disrespect when a Black man dared to gently put his knee on some turf at a sporting event was used to beat an unconscious police officer. Six people, including two police officers, have died.*

*The extent to which law enforcement participated in the riot remains to be determined. And there were certainly brave officers that day. Chief among them was **Eugene Goodman**, who risked his own life by diverting a violent mob from the Senate chamber. But we also witnessed troubling scenes. Before the crowd got in, before it grew and overwhelmed their defenses, an officer was seen **posing for selfies with rioters**, one wore a **MAGA hat and offered directions**, and, in one clip, it appears officers removed barricades. Most striking, however, was what they did not do. Where were the arrests, tear gas and unchecked use of force, so easily justified when people of color have the audacity to protest their own extermination? Where were the swarms of infantry like those that mobilized to **clear Lafayette Square** for a vainglorious photo op? In the aftermath of this failed insurrection, most participants just went home or to their hotel rooms. They were not cuffed or detained onsite, they were not questioned. They were hardly even slowed down as they fled the scene. Can any of us truthfully claim a Black person who did even a fraction of what these rioters did would not have left the scene in the back of a police cruiser, or more likely, a body bag? This is the cleansing power of whiteness: it turns pigeons into doves and terrorists into tourists.*

*This is why **Kyle Rittenhouse** could receive comfort and support from the cops, murder someone, and then go home to sleep in his own bed. This is why an insurrectionist seditious militia of white domestic terrorists can storm the halls of Congress, come within inches of kidnapping and killing our elected officials and bludgeon a police officer. They know they are protected; it never crossed their minds to be afraid.*

*The deep infiltration of white supremacy in law enforcement is a national problem. Seattle is not an exception. SPD has its own troubled history of excessive force and racism, which is in part why the department has been in a federal consent decree with the Department of Justice since 2012. At least six SPD officers were in DC during the riot—representing **the largest number of any police force in the country**. Days after, Seattle Police Officer's Guild president, Mike Solan, incorrectly **blamed** Black Lives Matter for the DC riot and has refused to resign or even apologize, **despite calls from the Mayor, Council and community** to do so. This kneejerk reactionary defense of anything that exposes the truth of white supremacy only further reveals the rot. These facts are well **known** to police commanders across the country. "Research*



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organizations have uncovered hundreds of federal, state, and local law enforcement officials participating in racist, nativist, and sexist social media activity, which demonstrates that overt bias is far too common. These officers' racist activities are often known within their departments, but only result in disciplinary action or termination if they trigger public scandals." I do not aim to vilify anyone, only to illustrate that we are not special. We flaunt our wokeness like a fancy scarf, but does it go deeper than optics if the scourge of white supremacy thrives beneath our feet as we navel-gaze? A photograph of a fireplace does little to warm your frostbite.

My wish is not to paint all police with a broad brush. However, it strains the boundaries of credulity to believe that these are isolated issues, confined to a "few bad apples." The ubiquity of this phenomenon, found in all corners of law enforcement, reveals a broken culture, a world split in two: white supremacists and those who know better but go along to get along. In such a culture, good people who stay silent attempt to walk the razor's edge between complicity and absolution. But it is a failed proposition. Silence is sunlight to the seeds of villainy. The full axiom is "one bad apple can spoil the barrel" and this barrel is writhing with maggots.

I do not pretend to have the answer, suffice to say that diversity workshops and videos on implicit bias are not going to change this culture. Such measures have utility combatting the ignorance of the well intentioned, but if you storm the Capitol with white nationalists one day, and then don a badge the next day, which allegiance claims primacy? An acolyte of hate and intolerance cannot be guided by justice.

*What can a career in law enforcement offer white nationalists? They get to use brute force to harm and restrain people of color; they know their "thin blue line" will encircle and defend them, no matter what. They know that, even if investigated, they will get paid administrative leave. If they make unjust arrests or kill someone, their department will try to cover it up, and if, by a miracle, any of that ever does make it to a court, they hide behind qualified immunity or claim that they shot someone in the back because they were in fear for their life. And they know that, if all those parachutes fail, they can just move counties and start it all over again. Might it be that white supremacy **sees** in law enforcement its most tangible, immediately satisfying and most enduring method of harming people of color? Law enforcement provides an ideal habitat for white supremacists—a pulpit from which they can level catastrophic harm while enjoying the greatest protections. They wear the uniform like camouflage, hiding in plain sight. I respect and hold gratitude for the service of anyone who does so with honor, but the dignity and duty espoused by the badge do not come with the badge; they need to be earned on the back of righteous deeds.*

*We talk about ignorance, unconscious bias, and the invisible systems that perpetuate racial inequity. But what about explicit bias? What about intentional, premeditated racism that is celebrated and rewarded? This racism cannot be scapegoated to fear or misplaced anger, or even "economic anxiety." It is a deeply rooted, marvelously disguised, desire to harm non-white people. White supremacists hold positions of authority and influence. They make the arrests and file the reports; they testify as expert witnesses, and they control the custody of evidence. Just as they did with **Ronald Greene**, they get to write the story and alter the truth to suit their agenda.*

For white supremacists, this is a passionate faith identity, as strong as any religious affiliation.



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They want people who do not look like them to be dead or in chains. They believe in “cleansing” melanin out of our gene pool. It is their sovereign purpose. A person who fundamentally believes their whiteness makes them superior, and thus entitled to subjugate and enslave people of color, has zero qualms using that whiteness as a cudgel. This person cannot be trusted to equitably mete out justice. Wielding such power when they disagree with the mere existence of non-white people renders them incapable of fairness. They are corrupted. The behavior of law enforcement during altercations with Black and brown folks does not illustrate a culture of justice. Rather, it belies a hunger for the tiniest plausible reason to lay hands on someone and “put them in their place.”

*I honestly do not know the path forward, but this idea might serve as a compass: “We’re not asking you to shoot guilty white people the way you shoot innocent Black people, we’re asking you to **protect innocent black people** the way you protect guilty white people.”*

As you are aware, the Seattle Police Department is one of the most progressive and accountable law enforcement agencies in the United States of America. A year ago, and just days before the unfortunate death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN, you and Council President Gonzalez touted SPD as the modeled reformed police agency. SPD lead in training, de-escalation practices and constitutional policing. To quote Interim Chief Diaz, our use of force is exceptionally low (less than .5% of all dispatches), and the use of serious force is close to a statistical anomaly (less than .5% percent of dispatches).

The city’s accountability system is controlled, directed and led by civilian oversight. The Department of Justice, who is the purveyor of how a police agency should conduct themselves, agreed with our elected officials and supported the termination of the settlement agreement. The city recruited future police officers based on these facts and they were able to hire more diverse workforce for the job of policing in the City of Seattle. This was accomplished by the understanding that the department’s modeled reform narrative and path toward social justice was enticing and appeared to be a welcoming place for employment. Now since the death of George Floyd in Minnesota, our politicians, influenced by loud activists, have pivoted and now claim that the whole criminal justice system is broken, wrought in racism and the Seattle Police Department needs to be “reimagined”. What happened to the Seattle modeled reformed police agency talk? What a sad turn of events in a year’s time.

The City of Seattle has spent hundreds of millions of tax payer dollars to get to a place of DOJ compliance to now simply be defunded. These same police officers, who did the reform work in record time, are being discriminately targeted for just being police officers. Our employment predicament is further threatened by City of Seattle employee(s) using city resources to spew racist messages/narratives targeting fellow city coworkers. As activists scream for more police accountability, will there be any accountability for other city employees who engage in racism and discrimination? We hope so.

Below are hyper linked resources for you to consider when evaluating our complaint in response Mr. Holmberg’s conduct:



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[https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/HumanResources/rules/Personnel Rule 1.1 .pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/HumanResources/rules/Personnel_Rule_1.1.pdf)

<https://www.seattle.gov/human-resources/working-at-the-city/our-values>

<https://durkan.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2018/09/09.21.18-Anti-Harassment-and-Anti-Discrimination-EO.pdf>

The City of Seattle Human Resources department notes the following as their mission statement regarding City Workplace Values and Expectations:

Inclusion

Nobody gets left out. City employees ensure that the people who will be impacted by our work have a say in how that work is carried out. In our workplace we make sure that everyone feels welcome and can share their skills. We are respectful in our communication and engagement with each other and the community. This means we honor our individual differences and value the contributions of different points of view, personal backgrounds, and skill sets to our workplace. We keep our work environment free of all forms of discrimination and harassment, intimidation, bullying, retaliation, and other harmful behavior.

Accountability

City employees own our work – as individuals and as an institution. We recognize that our work as individuals is connected to the collective work of all City departments. We are accountable to the people we work with and serve by taking responsibility for our decisions, actions, and outcomes as we serve the needs of our communities. We take responsibility and ownership for our job performance and follow the standards set for our work.

Stewardship

We are ethical caretakers of public resources. We promote inclusive and collaborative practices in our utilization of resources to best serve the public. We seek opportunities to improve resource use and optimize performance and are open to suggestions for improvements from others. We engage with others to improve situations and strive to cause no harm. We live to the highest ethical standard of conduct, and perform our jobs with integrity, in recognition of the trust placed in us by the communities we serve.

Seattle Police Officers, along with all other city employees, deserve the ability to come to work in a safe place. A workplace free of harassment, bias and discrimination. Mr. Holmberg's letter has now created a hostile work environment where our members fear for their safety. As you know, FAS controls the police facilities our members work in and the fleet of patrol cars used on a daily basis. Given the blatant racist, bias and discriminatory letter that was sent on behalf of FAS, the City of Seattle owes our membership and all City of Seattle Employees a thorough



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investigation into our complaint. We expect the City of Seattle to hold Mr. Holmberg and any other city employee that authorized this letter accountable for violating city policies.

As police officers, we understand that we have incredible power and influence over the populace. Given this power, we welcome and participate in accountability and work in conjunction with our accountability partners to gain community trust. This level of hostility from employee(s) within FAS should not be tolerated. As police officers, if we engaged in this direct attack against fellow coworkers in another city department, we would be swiftly held accountable and possibly terminated from employment. We implore you to hold any FAS employee(s) that participated in this act of racism, bias, discrimination and harassment be held to an equal level of accountability.

Respectfully,

Mike Solan
President
Seattle Police Officers Guild